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RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY 2953
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1403
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2276
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RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 003273

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SUBJECT: NEW COORDINATOR FOR CANTONMENT MANAGEMENT FACES
DAUNTING TASK

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Classified By: CDA Nicholas Dean. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) On December 18 Sushil Rana, Coordinator of the newly formed Office of the Central Coordinator for Cantonment Management within the Home Ministry, told Emboffs that his office was working hard to get the People's Liberation Army (PLA) camps up and running. Rana's office is tasked with managing food, shelter, and infrastructure for the camps as well as overseeing the seven local camp management offices. Rana described many challenges in camp management planning, including lack of clarity regarding final numbers of combatants, political pressure to perform, and debate on how much should be spent per combatant. Rana said his office was planning for the camps to be in place through the Constituent Assembly deadline of mid-June and likely a few months afterwards.

The Office of the Central Coordinator for Cantonment Management

2. (C) Sushil Rana, the Head of the Office of the Central Coordinator for Cantonment Management within the Home Ministry, emphasized that under the terms of the November 28 Agreement on the Management of Arms and Armies, once the UN had vetted and registered the People's Liberation Army (PLA) combatants, the Government of Nepal assumed responsibility for feeding and sheltering them. Rana said that his office was temporarily established within the Home Ministry for the purpose of handling management of the PLA cantonment sites and would close once the Maoists were "reintegrated." Rana said his office was planning for the camps to be in place through the Constituent Assembly deadline of mid-June and likely a few months afterwards.

Structure for Cantonment Management

3. (C) In terms of oversight of the cantonment management process, Rana described two levels of committees. First, there was a Policy Committee headed by the Prime Minister,

including heads of relevant Ministries, such as the Ministry of Finance and Peace Secretariat, representatives from the Seven-Party Alliance, and Maoist representatives once they joined the government. The second-level of oversight, Rana described, was a working level Implementation Committee to carry out decision of the policy committee. Rana indicated he was the Secretary of both the Policy and Implementation Committees. The Implementation Committee also oversaw local-level cantonment management offices at each of the seven cantonment sites. At the local-level, cantonment management offices were chaired, Rana stated, by the local Chief District Officers (CDOs) and include relevant local civil servants focused on health, water, and transportation.

Moving Forward Camp Planning

14. (C) Rana said that his office was developing plans for shelter, feeding, and infrastructure for the camps. Rana said that the arms containers (70 total) from India had arrived and that he was organizing transport of 35 of them to the seven main cantonment sites (5 per site). There was some debate on where the containers would be placed within the camps, he said, but this would be a decision for the Joint Monitoring Coordination Committee (JMCC). On food assistance, Rana said his office had done some research on the amount required per day for prison inmates (44 to 50 rupees), the National Army rank-and-file (60 rupees), and NA officers (75 to 80 rupees) and was trying to determine what would be acceptable amount to spend based on GON and Maoist input (Note: 1 USD is equivalent to approximately 71 Nepali Rupees. End Note.). On shelter, Rana said his office was open to the idea of Maoists constructing their own camps--and that likely the GON would provide the raw materials for the Maoists to do so. Rana said international donor offers to support the camps were being managed through the Ministry of Finance.

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Cash Transfer to the Maoists Defended

15. (C) When asked by Emboff how the Maoists had used the USD 2.4 million already transferred to them for feeding their soldiers, Rana said that it was not clear how the money had been spent (Note The press reported December 20 that the GON gave an additional USD 1.5 million to the Maoists. End Note) However, the GON had recognized that there would inevitably be a timelag between the Arms Management Agreement and when the Maoists camps were up and running. Rana said the money was meant to provide food and shelter for the Maoists during this interim period.

Final Numbers of Combatants Unclear

16. (C) Rana said his job was made more difficult by the lack of clarity regarding the final Q@51(Qklatants that would be cantoned. He reiterated that the final number would be determined by the UN-led registration process, which he recognized as crucial, but not the business of his office.

Comment

17. (C) Rana may have the most unenviable job in Nepal. Many Embassy contacts have described the status of the camps as a "mess." While combatants have begun convening near the camp sites, the GON is still working to secure food supplies from the World Food Program, identify infrastructure needs, and navigate Maoist accusations that they are not doing enough, quickly enough. The cantonment process is also challenged by a dizzying division of labor between the GON (camp management under Rana including food, shelter, and infrastructure), the UN (registration and monitoring), the Maoists (camp security and overall management of camps), and the Joint Monitoring Coordination Committee (monitoring). Rana's job will become even more interesting when the Maoists enter government and become a part of his team. Post will

continue to push for a quick and coherent cantonment process while encouraging the GON to stand strong against Maoist accusations, and urging the UN to effectively monitor abuses.
DEAN